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The professors and the single tax

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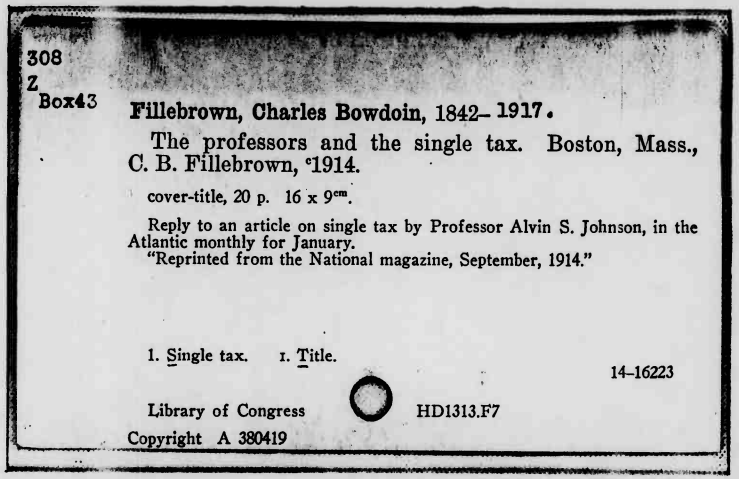

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Prof. E. R. A. Seligman

THE PROFESSORS AND THE SINGLE TAX

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C. B. FILLEBROWN

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National Magazine
September, 1914

The Professors and the Single Tax

The contribution to the discussion of the Single Tax by Professor Alvin S. Johnson of Cornell University in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, has stimulated general interest as to the attitude of professional economists on this question. Scores of professors and economists, including those who have attained first eminence, as well as those growing to distinction, have long been magnanimously hospitable to the discussion of the Single Tax. Granting the eccentricities or aberrations of single taxers, such as the Spencerian contention that private property in the land itself,— that is, for men to own land in severalty,— is wrong, and the economic hallucination that it might be administratively possible to take in taxation one hundred per cent or all of economic rent, may it not still be a fair question to propound to the professors whether they have attempted to separate the essential substance of the Single Tax proposal from the excrescences that have accumulated about it and to consider the main issue solely on its merits. Have they not rather shown a tendency to emphasize and magnify the irrelevant and inconsequential contentions of misguided advocates of the Single Tax, to the neglect of its central thesis?

The first question is, of course, as to the real importance of the Single Tax theory. If that importance is sufficient, should not the subject find place in the laboratory of the professor, where, by patient and careful analysis, qualitative and quantitative, dross is separated from gold? Has the Single Tax received at his hands discriminating examination and elucidation? Can it be claimed that the professors as a class have so studied as to reach an accepted scientific analysis and understanding? A careful examination of the discussions of the Single Tax in the formal treatises on political economy

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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National Magazine
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certainly fails to indicate any exhaustive research or to discover any considerable body of helpful, constructive criticism. Instead of recognizing the basal principle of the Single Tax, which is admitted even by the severest critics to be sound, and then developing this fruitful idea by eliminating error from its presentation and determining the limits of its economical application, the economists have seemingly bent their energies towards the annihilation of the whole doctrine. They have elected to play the easy role of hostile critic, instead of essaying the more difficult one of guide, philosopher and friend. It is, however, pleasant to record that to this general statement there are many notable specific exceptions.

A MISREPRESENTATION OF THE ISSUE

Professor Johnson prefaces his discussion with the following astonishing thesis:

> "The Single Tax movement would, therefore, be aptly designated as a propaganda for the universal confiscation of land. And this designation the single taxers themselves would accept without reservation. . . as a step in the direction of the confiscation of all private property."

This gratuitous assertion of Professor Johnson may be offset by the following declarations of the two authorities on Single Tax most widely recognized, Henry George and Thomas G. Shearman.

In 1892 George declared:*

> "I am not even a land nationalizationist, as the English and German and Australian land nationalizationists well know. I have never advocated the taking of land by the state or the holding of land by the state, further than needed for public use; still less the working of land by the state."

*Perplexed Philosopher, Doubleday, Page & Co., p. 70.

Shearman declared also in 1892:*

> "Shall we undertake to reclaim literal possession of 'the land for the people'? Rightly or wrongly, the moral sense of the people would revolt at such a proposition. And if it did not, yet the immense complications involved in awarding compensation for improvements would break down the whole project. It is not worth while to inquire into the abstract morality of an utterly impracticable scheme."

I have never before encountered Prof. Johnson's conception of the doctrine of the Single Tax from one having any pretence to knowledge of the subject. Such an introduction to the discussion is strongly suggestive of the farmer who put green goggles on his horse and fed him on shavings. "Confiscation" is penalty for crime, and the use of this term in connection with the Single Tax involves gross distortion and exaggeration. The sovereign state may appropriate private property of its citizens in two ways (1) by confiscation (2) by taxation. When one particular man by treason or otherwise, has forfeited his rights as a citizen, the lands and houses and personalty of this one man may all be "forfeit to the crown," while the validity and sanctity of 9,999 other men's rights are in no way infringed. This is confiscation. On the other hand, when the state, in order to obtain the revenue to meet the expenses of government, levies tribute upon its 10,000 citizens impartially, this is taxation. Those who make this charge of confiscation forget that land investment to-day is practically free of tax, and that the burden is upon them to show how in justice this anomalous exemption should continue.

A CORRECT PRESENTATION OF THE ISSUE

Why did not Professor Johnson find space to say that the Single Tax seeks to embody the principle of the application of common property to

*Natural Taxation, Doubleday, Page & Co., p 215.

common uses, "the taking by the community, for the use of the community, of that value which is the creation of the community"*—the justice of which will, I venture to say, be acknowledged by nine out of ten of the economists of the world? Why did he not say that the single taxer hangs his hope upon the fact that, however heavy the tax upon land, it can be no burden upon the worker,† and cannot affect the *use* value of land—that an "old" tax, *i. e.* a tax which was upon the land when it passed to the present owner, is not now a burden upon him—that only a future "new" tax would be a net deduction from the rent of his land—that a land owner *per se* is not a "parasite" except to the extent that he fails in his landlord-duty to improve his land,—to the extent only that he stands between man and the land and becomes a speculator, a cornerer of a necessary of life?

SPOLIATION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Again, Professor Johnson represents the Single Tax as "essentially a device for the spoliation of the middle class." When a man buys land in Regina for $5,000 and sells it ten years later for $200,000, who is it, will Professor Johnson tell us, that is saddled with the maintenance of this $195,000 of "water" if not the "great middle class" of Regina, the class whose improvements, of all others the world over, generally exceed the site value of their land, and to whom, therefore, the remission of taxes on their improvements would be tantamount to compensation rather than confiscation since their tax burden would be proportionately less? Or again, to pile Pelion upon Ossa, if the land values of the city of Seattle, state of Washington, which in 1901 were $71,000,000 are ten years later in 1911, $281,000,000, who is to pay the taxes eventually necessary to maintain this added $211,000,000 speculative value if it is not the middle class, the occupiers, users and improvers of the land of Seattle? One advantage

*Progress and Poverty, Doubleday, Page & Co., p. 419.

†A B C of Taxation, C. B. Fillebrown, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1909. Chap. II., p. 31.

of the Single Tax to the "middle class" man, if he is a would-be farmer, is that in so far as an increased tax on the land decreases its selling price, he will require less ready capital for the purchase of a farm. It will not, however, alter the annual cost to him for its use; this will always be the sum of the interest on his investment plus his land tax. If his purchase price is lower, his tax will be higher, and *vice versa*. Prof. Johnson has overlooked the fact that one-third of the farmers are tenants and will look to their landlords to pay the land tax. As to the two-thirds who are owners and cultivators, the general remedy will apply that, however adverse the effect upon any particular class of land owners, their alleged injury cannot obtain beyond two or three generations at farthest. They can meantime have no ground of complaint beyond having their investment, now free of tax, subjected to the same rate as buildings that are upon the land.

SOURCE OF PRESENT COLOSSAL INDUSTRIALISM

According to Professor Johnson, "It was the unearned increment which opened the West and laid the basis for our present colossal industrialism. . . has moved hundreds of thousands from our middle west to the Canadian Northwest." It was, he declares, the unearned increment rather than the hunger and wanderlust of millions that created a vast surplus of food products. It is the general impression that the hunger of the millions developed their food supply along the line of least resistance. Is it not free land that for a hundred years has promoted the westward tide? Now that this land is no longer free for use but monopolized out of use, the "Westward Ho!" man has no one to defend him from the speculator in the increment who wants to sell him his land at a "watered" price. So he falls in with the current to Canada where a government shows interest enough to help pay his traveling expenses from some distant country, gives him

temporary free support, helps him to settle, and lends him credit with which to start. The Single Tax would offer an additional inducement in the fact that the best lands would be open to him at the lowest instead of the highest price. It may well be asked, who gets the principal benefit of this Northwest movement? Is it the "hundreds of thousands" moving away from the "middle West"? Is it the depopulated district, or is it the land speculator who intercepts a very considerable portion of this benefit to the settler by anticipating and appropriating the land increment. Of this increment it may be said that it is "water" in precisely the same sense in which five hundred million of steel stock is water. It is the capitalization of the heaviest tribute that the steel traffic or the land traffic will bear—a dividend without an investment.

It is delusive to say that in any true sense the speculators have created these industries and values. They simply banked upon the general recognition that people must have land as they must have grain, and they cornered the land as grain is cornered and thus profited at the expense of the great "middle class," the workers of the world. Thus it is by no means clear that the "unearned increment" has not been more of a bane than a blessing in the development of this country. It is the artificial prominence of the centrifugal spreading-out influence with its unsystematic wasteful and prodigal treatment of the land that has made the United States a byword among the nations.

The Sage of Concord * was wise when he said of the rush to get rich: "The luck of one is the hope of thousands, and the bribe acts like the neighborhood of a gold mine to impoverish the farm, the school, the house, the church, and the very body and feature of man." What did these words betoken if not a clear intellectual epitome of the whole land question, pronounced nearly four score years ago before the hegira of the forty-niners, and early in the great land movement to the West?

*Ralph Waldo Emerson in address "Nature" at Watervlle College, Maine, Aug. 11, 1841.

THE PROFESSORS ON PARADE

The foregoing easy disposal of the Single Tax by Professor Johnson tempts one to turn attention to the treatment of the subject by standard economic writers. The writings of eleven authorities, Bullock, Daniels, Davenport, Ely, Fetter, Fisher, Hadley, Plehn, Seager, Seligman and Taussig—have been examined and excerpts made to exhibit their views on the Single Tax. Thus an occasion is presented for the single taxer to make his complaints and find what fault he can with those who hold the keys to the Kingdom of Economics.

CONFISCATION, NATIONALIZATION, OWNERSHIP

In reading these treatises one cannot escape being impressed by the near unanimity, nine to two, with which the writers confidently dispose of the pretensions of the George plan by assuring themselves that he aimed at the upsetting of a cherished institution, the destruction of property rights, thus hopelessly prejudicing the case even before a jury has been impanelled. This method of treatment is vehemently protested as an unscientific mode of procedure. With the deadly assumption of the intended abolition of "property in land" there follows easy assent to the consequent charge of nationalization of land on the high Single Tax road to Professor Johnson's "confiscation of all private property." We believe it to be a well grounded complaint that the treatment of the "books" is sometimes superficial, not always fair, and not always abreast of the times.

Professor Charles J. Bullock says:

> "The proposal to confiscate existing rents must be rejected as unjust.* (E. 328.) It is evident

*These and subsequent page references are from
Bullock's Elements of Economics and Introduction to the Study of Economics,
Ely's Outline of Economics,
Hadley's Economics,
Seager's Introduction to Economics, and
Seligman's Essays in Taxation.

that such a plan is equivalent to national ownership, or nationalization of land. (I. 495.) . . Mr. George's plan of confiscating the value of land without compensating present owners does not appeal to the conscience of the average American as just. Society has allowed private land ownership in this country ever since English settlement. The present owners have invested in land in good faith. If it should be decided inexpedient to continue our present system, the burden of the change should not be thrown upon the single class of landowners." (I. 500.)

Professor Richard T. Ely says:

"Mr. George proposes to take all the unearned increment, past and present, and that whether the present owners have been encouraged to believe that they might be permitted to appropriate the whole unearned increment or not. Herein lies the essential injustice of Mr. George's scheme. . . (596.) Mr. George not only proposes to confiscate all economic rent without compensation, and to abolish all other forms of taxation, but the assertion is made in explanation and justification of the policy that it will abolish poverty. . . No abstract reasoning, based on 'natural rights,' will persuade a modern nation to so radical a step." (597.)

President Arthur T. Hadley says:

"They propose either to make the land common property and let this gain accrue to the public (land nationalization) or to leave the title in private hands as at present, but tax economic rent to its full amount in lieu of all other taxes, the Single Tax theory." (470-1.)

Professor Henry R. Seager says:

"Such policies amount to confiscation and can only be justified on the ground that they are absolutely essential to general well-being. (522.) . . To deprive them of their lands, or what amounts to the same thing, of the income which these lands afford, would be to commit a monstrous piece of injustice. (522.) . . A state

which would thus overturn an established institution, and confiscate by wholesale the property of its citizens, would lose the confidence of those citizens and be reduced to a condition of anarchy bordering on civil war. (523.) . Such a tax involves the confiscation of property." (585.)

Professor E. R. A. Seligman says:

"When the change advocated is a direct reversal of the progress of centuries, and a reversion to primitive conditions away from which all history has travelled, the necessity for its absolute proof becomes far stronger. The nationalization of land is a demand which, in order to win general acceptance, must be based on theories independent of the doctrine of natural rights."

In their opposition to the Single Tax, the professors appear substantially to assume that Henry George and the Single Tax are synonymous and coterminous, and that when they have overthrown the "temple" of their own interpretation of Henry George, the Single Tax goes to ruin with it. Such a course is hardly fair because of the fact that of the "old" believers in Henry George a respectable minority do not at all follow the professors in their interpretation. Mr. Thomas G. Shearman, who made a scientific exposition of the Single Tax, which no one claims to have successfully attacked, has not even been invoked as a commentator, and a whole lot of didactic matter in extension of Henry George's formula—matter that has received high academic indorsement as sound educational material,—escapes the notice of should-be-careful economic guides. These noted teachers should grasp the fact that they are, so to speak, bellwethers of a great and perennial flock of citizens in the making, even as Solomon of old doubtless had grasped the profound sociological truth that when the king takes snuff all the people sneeze, a perception which presumably accounted in no small degree for the temperance and wisdom of his habits.

The professors have a right to believe if they choose, that Henry George thought the application of his remedy would result eventually in the

abolition of the institution of private property in land. On the other hand, the fact that a body of original enthusiasts persistently shout this proposition should not mislead the professors to mistake noise for numbers and thus implicate a vastly more numerous body of logical and consistent believers in the Single Tax who stoutly defend private proprietorship. Even though Henry George said "it is not necessary to confiscate land, it is only necessary to confiscate rent," would it not be a scientific procedure to correct such a false impression, from whatever source, as that gradual taxation is criminal forfeiture, confiscation, a term that wrested from its proper context and in a distorted sense has been worked threadbare in a foreign service? A worker in the Oregon field expresses full appreciation of the baleful effects of this error when he says that the particular parts of Henry George's teachings which are construed to mean the destruction of the institution of private property in land "were used with a terrific effect" in the Single Tax campaign of two years ago.

Whether or not Henry George meant to assert that the taking of any part or all of ground rent in taxation would destroy individual ownership in severalty of the land itself is yet a debatable question. In any event his assertion cannot make a right out of a wrong. The party of the other part wonders why the professors should be strenuous to profit by a verbal inaccuracy of Henry George's instead of bringing the economic question involved before the bar of their own enlightened judgment?

The edge of the professorial criticism is dulled by the fact that it is so largely directed not to a scientific but to an unscientific statement of the Single Tax. It is not even directed to the plain scientific form in which George put it, but to a muddled by-interpretation, the speciousness of which ought not to impose upon university men. The provoking part of it is that in aid of a fairer definition of the situation Mr. George himself was not called in to cut his own Gordian knot. It was Mr. George's special achievement that while distinctly conceding

the legal ownership, individual tenure of, or estate in the land itself, he corrected and advanced the issue from the common right to the use of the earth to the joint right to the enjoyment of rent, making clear the fact that land is one thing and the rent of land another and entirely different thing, and that to take in taxation the rent of land it is not necessary to take the land itself, yet we are nonchalantly told by leading professors that anyway we are aiming only at an academic distinction.

The truth or error of the Single Tax does not depend upon the infallibility of Henry George or even upon his elucidation of it. It is difficult to see why professors should have been blind to the scientific principle involved simply because they were not ready to follow Henry George in all his conclusions. The science of taxation has been better presented by another man who was just as devoted a philanthropist as Henry George. The professors have had before them for twenty years the work of Thomas G. Shearman on "Natural Taxation." It is curious that while Henry George has been exposed to all manner of criticism, I have yet to meet an attempted refutation of a single principle as expounded by Mr. Shearman, or to meet the man who wanted to refute them. Reviewing his own work, Mr. Shearman, of whom a coworker in large affairs said: "I consider his character and his career the most unique character and the most unique career of any man whom I ever knew, or of any man of whom I ever read," made the following record:

> "I do not estimate very highly the value of my own work in any direction, in business, in the church, or in public affairs. But I can see more substantial fruit of my efforts in the direction of a higher development of humanity through the reform of taxation than in any other direction whatever. Obscure as my work has been, . . it has marked a channel in which an everswelling tide of human energy will flow. . . It has given a direction to the spirit of reform which will insure great results after I have left the work forever."

The single taxer wonders how the academic treatment of his pet thesis can be reckoned adequate when in seven out of eleven volumes of political economy under consideration, the name of Thomas G. Shearman is not indexed, while the other four have half a dozen references, none of which citations or references deal with the principles of the Single Tax.

It is well worth while to clear up this confusion as to common property in land. Henry George presented for his remedy a perfect formula ;* nevertheless, he continued ambiguously to reiterate the recanted error of Spencer condemning specific ownership of land, but he did this in such relation to his own record and in such context as to justify the general opinion that his attack was aimed not at ownership of land, but at ownership of rent. Thirdly, in this Spencerian phase, not only does he lack the support of any other known economist, but no Single Tax writer before or after him appears to have been impressed with such a view. If progress of events and of the science of taxation should ever cause the economists to expunge from their records this *ex parte* verdict upon a mistaken and factitious issue, the case against normal revenue methods would be greatly reduced in volume.

TAXATION OF FUTURE INCREMENT

The proposal to take in taxation a substantial part of the future increment of land value, to which ready and wide assent has been given, is discussed by only two of the eleven writers under scrutiny.

Professor Taussig says:†

"A different proposal is that to appropriate, not the whole of the unearned increment, but the future accretions. . . Take for society at large the increase of rents that will arise hereafter. There can be no objections in principle to this proposal. . . The question is different as regards the rise in rent that is still to come. There is no vested right in the indefinite future. . . With the rapid growth of modern cities and the unmistakable swelling of site rents, a reservation of the community's rights with respect to urban land has met with steadily increasing recognition. The form in which this right is most likely to be asserted is that of a special tax on the newly accruing increase in site values. In strict theory, the whole of this increase might be taken through taxation."

*Progress and Poverty Book VIII., Chap. II.

†F. W. Taussig "Principles of Economics," Vol.. II, pp. 75 and 102.

Professor Bullock says:

"If the proposal to confiscate existing rents must be rejected as unjust, the same criticism can not be directed at projects for gradually appropriating to public purposes the future increment of land values. (E. 328.) . . To adjust municipal taxation in such a manner as to intercept a considerable part of the future unearned increment from land would be a safe and probably a desirable policy. . . It would, moreover, be in line with some of the existing tendencies in municipal finance. (E. 329.) . . But any income acquired by paying its capitalized value is not to be considered unearned. (E. 291.) . . So far as urban lands are concerned, there can be little doubt that it is the part of wisdom for municipalities to seize upon a source of revenue that is brought into existence by urban growth and to a large extent maintained by constant public expenditure. (E. 330.) . . We must admit that a large unearned increment of ground rents is secured by the owners of specially favored lots. No one would question the justice of imposing a part of the burden of taxation upon such an income." (I. 499.)

At this point a generous critic finds himself confronted by a painful sense of disproportion between topic and treatment. Taxation of the future increment is a recent development in legislation, though it is not new to discussion. It seems adapted to circumvent many or most of the objections raised against the additional taxation of present rent, and

for that reason it appears to command a recognition peculiar to itself. It seems to promise in some cases the possibility of a common ground for initial proceedings, yet only two out of our eleven writers give material attention to this proposition, which has received a certain recognition in both Great Britain and Germany, and these two writers compress the treatment into extremely small compass. One is tempted to ask of the professors bluntly: "Are you really the leaders, the pioneers, the inventors, the Edisons, and the Marconis of the world's economic thought?" If the taxation of economic rent is sound in principle, why should it receive such scant attention from our chosen authorities?*

MONOPOLY AND PRIVILEGE

Perhaps no single term has insinuated itself more into popular apprehension during the last decade than the term "Privilege." The press, legislators, statesmen and presidential candidates have expounded and exploited it copiously. Following this initiative, single taxers have taken great pains to formulate and define "privilege" and to put its destructive features in a scientific setting. Naturally the absence even of the term "privilege" in the indexes to the economic books under consideration occasions momentary surprise.

Privilege is believed to offer great advantage as a vehicle for economic teaching and discussion, as perhaps more inclusive though less specific than monopoly, the established standard term.

*Rev. J. Kelleher, teacher of St. John's College, Waterford, Ireland, priest of a church which lays no claim to specific economic leading, has almost stolen the march on his American brethren when he says in the January, 1914, Irish Theological Quarterly that: "I have already laboured to show that the present land owners should not be permitted to appropriate any of the natural increase in land values beyond what is represented in the present market value of their lands, . . . If the entire increase is due to the public, then surely there ought to be no objection against taking a bare 10 per cent or 20 per cent of it. One-fifth or even one-tenth of a loaf is better than no bread. . . Although the whole of the natural increase in land values should belong properly to the public, and therefore to take 10 per cent or 20 per cent of it from the present land owners would be no injustice . . . ." Fr. Kelleher is the author of an excellent book "Private Ownership, its Basis and Equitable Condition," published by M. H. Gill & Son, Ltd., Dublin, Ireland. Both book ($1.25) and Quarterly (65c) may be had of Benziger Bros., 36 Barclay St., New York.

The foregoing declaration and the following statement of Rev. Edward McGlynn, declared by due authority in 1892 to contain nothing contrary to Catholic teaching, make a liberal contribution to the economic solution: "To permit any portion of this public property to go into private pockets, without a perfect equivalent being paid into the public treasury, would be an injustice to the community. Therefore the whole rental fund should be appropriated to common or public uses."

THE THREE POSTULATES OF THE SINGLE TAX

It may not seem a gracious act in us to file claims against the college and university commissaries for an inadvertent short measure here and there in dealing out their rich stores of learning, but it has to be performed. Here is the one closing specification. In Single Tax propaganda much time has been given to explaining the triple alliance of three principles:

(1.) The social origin of ground rent.

(2.) The nonshiftability of a land tax.

(3.) The ultimate burdenlessness of a land tax.

The second and third of these have received from the authorities full description and almost universal indorsement. But antecedent to these is the first principle: What is it that gives rise to economic rent, the value of land? On this point the question arises: Is the teacher giving to his pupils all there is to be had? In an enumeration of the causes of ground rent, population is usually the one first named. But a passive population gives little value to land; it is rather the activities consequent upon the character of population that create the value. The topic invites easy and profitable amplification. In competition with the few lines of the authorities at this juncture, let us here suggest a specimen effort aimed at a fuller answer to the question: Elements that enter into land value may be enumerated as follows:—"right and ease of access to water, health inspection, sewerage, fire protection, police, schools, libraries, museums, parks, playgrounds,

steam and electric railway service, gas and electric lighting, telegraph and telephone service, subways, ferries, churches, public schools, private schools, colleges, universities, public buildings—utilities which depend for their efficiency and economy on the character of the government; which collectively constitute the economic and social advantages of the land; and which are due to the presence and activity of population, and are inseparable therefrom, including the benefit of proximity to and command of, facilities for commerce and communication with the world—an artificial value created primarily through public expenditure of taxes. For the sake of brevity, the substance of this definition may be conveniently expressed as the value of 'proximity.' "*

Is not such a proposition as the above, based upon premises of the professors' own making, worthy of a place in the literature of Political Economy? Especially when it can command from one of their own number such substantial approval as follows:

"The broad basis of this tripos of the Single Tax will doubtless withstand assaults. Since the ground rent of land is a social product, it is just to take at least enough of it in taxation to meet the expenses of government. Such a tax, furthermore, can not be shifted from the land owners to other classes in the community, but must be paid wholly and finally by them. It is, moreover, just that they should be taxed specially in this fashion; because in most cases they have bought their land tax-free under the operation of the principle that the selling value of land is an untaxed value and a land tax cannot survive a change of ownership. This three-fold support of the Single Tax is the stoutest that has been erected by any champion of the policy. Any one who will take the pains to study the economic principles involved, and their application, must concede the substantial validity of the arguments."†

*A B C of Taxation, p. 13.

†Prof. F. Spencer Baldwin, Editorial, *Boston Transcript*; Mar. 16, 1909.

A *MODUS OPERANDI*

But assuming that the people and legislators have been converted, and that a Single Tax statute is on the books, will not its inauguration be complicated by indeterminate factors and subtle mathematical calculations?

The following is respectfully submitted as an illustration of how simple a matter, mechanically speaking, would be the actual inauguration of the Single Tax when once decided upon, taking Boston as an example. Meantime, let us keep particular watch for the point where the alleged confiscation enters into the calculation.

For instance, applied to the assessment of a specific lot of land for which the user pays a gross ground rent of say	$67.20
Of which amount there is now taken in taxation	17.20
Leaving a net income to the owner of	$50.00
The selling value, (presumably also the assessed valuation), would be, at 5 per cent	$1,000.00
Proceeding to take yearly from now on one per cent additional of the gross ground rent of $67.20 for a period of thirty years, would amount in all to 30 per cent of $67.20 equal to	$20.16
Which, added to the tax already taken	$17.20
Would give at the end of thirty years, from the $1,000 worth of land alone, everything else being exempted, a total tax of	$37.36
Which is a trifle more than one-half of the gross ground rent of	$67.20

The opening exhibit in detail would stand as follows:

In 1913 the tax on this $1,000 worth of land was	$17.20

In 1914 the tax would be $17.20 plus 67c. (one per cent of the gross ground rent $67.20); equal to $17.87
Reducing the owner's net rent from $50 to $49.33.

In 1915 the tax would be $17.20 plus $1.34 (two per cent of the $67.20); totalling $18.54
Reducing the owner's net rent from $50 to $48.66

In 1916 the tax would be $17.20 plus $2.01 (three per cent of the $67.20) or $19.21
Reducing the owner's net rent from $50 to $47.99.

This formula could be so adapted as to absorb any desired proportion of the future increment, leaving the present valuation exempt, as now, by simply continuing the present rate as a constant factor for each year, and adding each year to the annual budget 5 per cent (or less) of the increase to the assessed valuation of land over and above that of the previous year, and fixing each new annual tax rate accordingly.

For example, assuming that a gross ground rent of $67.20 should double in 25 years to $134.40. This percentage of increase would amount to an average yearly increase of 4 per cent of the gross ground rent, ($67.20), equal to $2.68

Assuming that it is desired to take in taxation one-half of this 4 per cent annual increase in the ground rent, or 2 per cent of the $67.20, the exhibit would be as follows:

For 1914: The 1913 tax of $17.20 plus $1.34 (2 per cent of $67.20) would make the total tax $18.54
Reducing the owner's net rent from $50 to $48.66.

For 1921: The 1913 tax of $17.20 plus $9.40 (seven times 2 per cent or 14 per cent of $67.20) would make the total tax $26.60
Reducing the owner's net rent from $50 to $40.60

Whether the assessment be made upon the capital value or upon the rent would make small difference for some years to come. The change from the one to the other could be effected in any year by assessing the budget in proportion to individual ground rents instead of in proportion to individual valuations.

The more one realizes to what a fatuous extent Henry George men are themselves responsible for the perversion of the main contention of their chief, the more unfortunate does it appear that unwise methods of one kind and another should have been forced into the issue, and retarded the reform substantially for a generation, thus lessening the tremendous original impulse of "Progress and Poverty." That impulse was great enough under wise methods, to have brought the world of to-day to a full recognition that taxation has a rightful domicile in the domain of science.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the facts which have been pointed out, will suffice to induce economists to whom the people look for light and leading to re-examine the whole subject of the so-called Single Tax, not in the light of any fore-conception such as might result from certain *obiter dicta* of Henry George, but by independent investigation based on authoritative definitions and presentation of Single Tax philosophy, such as is found, for example, in Shearman's "Natural Taxation." The results of such investigation conducted by trained and unbiased economists, uninfluenced by the opinions or conflicting statements of previous writers, would be of the highest service to all who are interested in the present desperate need of the world, namely,

a proper shaping of revenue methods, whether of town, city, state or nation.

This article then is our earnest plea for a new trial with a change of venue with reasonable assurance of a fair verdict upon the Single Tax as known to its friends.

It is a parade review of the "human" professors face to face, allowing us the satisfaction of telling not only how much we think of them, but what we don't think of them.

It is the disavowal of an aim at the wholesale conversion of the world to a following of Henry George and his writings *in toto*.

It contains the needful reiteration of the fact that Herbert Spencer was wrong when he said that "private ownership in land is not permissible," but was right in taking back out of thirteen sections of Chapter IX of Social Statics* the six only which related solely to this point; and that Henry George was right when he said that "the joint or common right" of men is not to the land but to the rent of land.

Incidentally it embraces also an exemplification of the administrative simplicity of the taxation of economic rent.

With apologies for these works, as it were of supererogation, we rest from our labors and pray for the fruition of a great hope.

* Perplexed Philosopher, Doubleday, Page & Co., Chap I.

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